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ELECTRONICS FACILITIES IN CUBA

ANNEX 8

SOVIET BLOC LAND RADAR EQUIPMENT IN CUBA AS OF OCTOBER 1960

CIA/RR EP60-73-S8

November 1960

See Figure 21 of CIA RR EP 60-73

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A review of pertinent intelligence reports has been made in an attempt to determine the existence of Soviet Bloc radar equipment in Cuba. Unfortunately, there has been no positive reporting on this subject -- most reports have been based on rumors or hearsay. Thus it is impossible to state definitely that certain types of Bloc radar are deployed in Cuba. The meager evidence available, however, does point to the probable existence of some types of radar in Cuba. Applicable reported incidents are as follows:

On 28 June the Soviet merchant ship, Baltiysk, unloaded, under maximum security, 3000 tons of cargo at Havana. The cargo was military equipment including radar and other electronic items. About 20 Soviet technicians reportedly also were debarked in Havana. In addition to the military cargo, 5000 tons of chemical fertilizer were unloaded. ALUSNA, Havana, believes the cargo included bazookas and possibly some rocket arms and considerable electronic equipment, including radars. ALUSNA, although it acknowledged reports of aircraft parts in the shipment, feels that the secrecy of the transaction was due to the origin of the cargo and the fact that radar and possibly some new, small weapons were involved.

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A state telegram from BONN advised that radar shipments originating in Prague were being sent [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] To date, no verification of this report was been obtained.

The Soviet merchant ship, Ilya Mechnikov, arrived in Havana on 8 September with what appeared to be a major arms shipment from the USSR. Various types of military equipment reportedly were unloaded, and one description of the cargo included "long-range reflectors," "small electric plants about 5 feet each," and "radar equipment."

An observer who managed to enter Baracoa Military Airfield reported that he saw four very large boxes. One box, which was uncrated, contained a large, metal, air-conditioned van, through the open door of which were visible panels of electronic equipment. Baracoa (23°03' N - 82°34' W) is located approximately 14 miles west of Havana.

Another report states that radar sites exist between Mariel (22°59' N - 82°45' W) and Baracoa. These radars are mobile and have an approximate range of 30 miles. This report seems doubtful for the distance between these two points is only about 15 miles. A second report, however, states this radar line extends from Mariel to Caibarien (22°32' N - 79°28' W), or a distance of approximately 200 statute miles. According to this report, about 20 radars with a range of 30 miles exist along this northern coast line. The approximate position of one radar is given as between Santa Fe and Mariel. This source further reports the night use of truck-mounted radars as gap-fillers. Communications between radars is on a frequency of 152 and 153 megacycles.

It is difficult to determine the accuracy of the above reports, and in the case of the unloading of the Baltiysk it is possible that a good majority of the information is fictional. On the other hand, it is impossible to discount all reporting referring to radar, and it is probable that unidentified types of Soviet Bloc radar exist in Cuba.

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The term "long-range reflectors" used above, implies a radar used for early warning or an associated function -- such as target acquisition or as part of a GCI stations. Many Soviet radars can be included in this general category, but the most likely would be the P-8 or P-10 (nicknamed KNIFE REST A and KNIFE REST B or C, respectively). (See the illustrations.) Another, but lesser, possibility would be a P-20 (TOKEN) type.

The description of a van is not sufficient to speculate on a specific type of radar or a particular function. It is quite possible, however, that the source observed a radar van.

The first type of radar -- the one with approximately a 30-mile range, fits the general description of a gun-laying radar. This possibility is partly supported by the reported offloading of anti-aircraft artillery. In this category likely types would be the SON-4 or SON-9 (nicknamed WHIFF and FIRE CAN, respectively). The truck-mounted gap-fillers could be the relatively new radar nicknamed FLAT FACE (Soviet designation believed to be P-15). This radar reportedly has a low altitude detection capability. Recently sets of this type were given to the Chinese Communists.

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